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# Bagram News Express

*Fighting Terror, Building Peace*

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## Your best...nothing more

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**By Maj. Michael Johnson**

455 Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron commander

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan — I've always believed what you get out of an assignment or deployment is equal to what you put into it. No matter where we are or what we do, we can learn something. Even when I was sent remote for a year, I had a very positive experience, the opposite of what I was expecting; one in which I made lasting friendships. Attitude and a positive outlook drastically affect our lives. Colin Powell said "Perpetual optimism is a force multiplier." Over the years, I've tried to implement a few simple principles that have really made a difference, not only professionally but personally.

**Build relationships, not just contacts.** Life is so much more than simply knowing who to talk to in order to take care of business. Building relationships is about getting to know people, what's on their minds, and most importantly, how you can help them. Take the time to talk about something other than work. I've found that sitting down at lunch or dinner with folks has been a great time. Not only does it tend to be

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a lot of fun, but I get to know the people I'm working with better. While you're here, take the time to plan a cookout or organize some kind of get together. These things build teamwork.

*Leave the place better than when you arrived.* Things can always be improved; and here at Bagram, there are plenty of opportunities to leave your mark. It can be something to do with your job or just getting involved off-duty (ACE, 5/6, chapel services, etc).

**Solve problems, don't just identify them.** My first commander told me to have one or two possible solutions for every problem I briefed him about. Being able to provide solutions is invaluable to any organization. When you see a problem or something that needs improvements, fix it. There are a lot of things needing to be fixed that may not necessarily fall into your job description. If you can figure a way to get the job done, you'll make life better for everyone else around you.

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**Give credit to the team for success and take failure as your own.** We rarely accomplish anything alone. In a past deployment, Lt. Gen. North gave out some coins to our Airmen. General North asked them what they did to deserve his coin. I didn't hear a single one start off with "I did..." Instead, they talked about their accomplishments as a team effort, "my shop... our team... we did..." These folks embodied the value of service before self. It is as a team that we can accomplish our greatest goals.

**Volunteer for projects.** My commander at Pope Air Force Base, N.C., termed these as CLP's, or Crappy Little Projects. There are always projects that need to be done at every assignment that do not neatly fall into a single career field. Use these opportunities to learn and lead multi-function teams at an early age. Not only will you fill a gap, but you will gain in-

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# Engineers hold workshop for Afghan contractors



*Capt. Jason M. Aftanas speaks at the Panjshir Province Contractor Workshop at the Panjshir Provincial Director of Communications building April 16. (U.S. Air Force photo by Lt. Col Russell T. Kaskel)*

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**By Capt. Jillian Torango**  
Panjshir Provincial  
Reconstruction Team

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PANJSHIR PROVINCE, Afghanistan — More than 80 Afghan contractors recently participated in a workshop hosted by the Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team engineers to discuss the Commander's Emergency Response Program contracting process and to present upgraded construction standards.

The annual workshop explains the bidding process and presents new quality control concepts and procedures. The engineers use the forum as an opportunity to explain any contract process differences as well as any upgrades or improvements that will be required for construction projects in the province.

“By working with and provid-

ing this information directly to the contractors, they'll be able to better manage their projects,” said Capt. Kenneth McGinnis, who is deployed from Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D. “They'll have better situational awareness and will be better able to ensure that they provide the best project possible.”

The engineers guarantee they get the contractors who are most knowledgeable about the processes and requirements by limiting who can submit project bids.

“Only the contractors who attend this workshop will be able to bid on PRT projects throughout the next year,” said Capt. Jason M. Aftanas, who is deployed from

Anderson Air Force Base, Guam. “This is because they'll understand exactly what we are asking for and we know that we'll get a good quality project completed

for the people of Panjshir.”

A few major differences were the focus of this year's workshop. The first was the completion of the bid proposals submitted by the contractors.

“We will be looking for five major items now when we receive bid proposals,” said Captain Aftanas. “We'll review the packages to determine if the design drawings are competent, the contractor's proposal meets the scope of work, the cost estimate is complete and within budget, and if there's a work plan that addresses a work

schedule, quality assurance and control plan, and a worksite safety program.”

The next topic was how the engineers rank order and select the winning contractor. There are two main differences with this process this year. First, projects will eventually be evaluated on merit and not the lowest bidder.

“Even though cost is important, once we rank order the bids by price and select the first 10 acceptable bids, we stop looking at the bid price,” said Captain Aftanas. “It is more important to ensure we get the best project possible for the people of Panjshir.”

The second difference is that only five percent of the final “score” correlates directly to where the contractor is from.

“If a contractor is from Panjshir, they'll receive a higher percentage

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## ATTITUDE from Page 1

valuable experience that'll pay dividends in the future. These projects include things like air show preparation committees, DV visits, base appearance cleanup days, etc. Don't be afraid to learn something new or to get out of your comfort zone.

***Do your best in every aspect of life.*** Excellence in all we do is not just a catch phrase; it should be

a way of life in and out of the Air Force. No one can expect more than your best. I think Aristotle said it best, "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit." This idea transcends our job and spills over into our personal lives and interactions with family, schools, church...anything we're involved with.

Finally, ***never give up.*** Throughout our nation's history,

achievements have been made by regular men and women who've achieved great things through hard work and perseverance. Thomas Edison tried over 1,500 materials before finding the right one for the light bulb. Things may seem hard, almost impossible, to get accomplished but stick with it. You'll be glad in the long run knowing you gave it your best. Nothing more can be asked for than your best.

## News Briefs

### POLICY LETTERS

New and updated policy letters have been added to the Bagram webpage. Please take the time to review them.

### BILLETING INSPECTION

The Army billeting office was directed to perform an inspection of all billeting areas in each camp. The inspection for Camp Cunningham is scheduled for May 26. The BAF safety office will also be a part of this inspection.

Purpose:

- Ensure our compliance with the sand book and current base operations.
- Ensure compliance with all safety standards.
- Inspect living spaces (Common Areas), force protection and the office spaces of each unit.

### MUSIC NIGHTS

Stop by the Camp Cunningham Recreation Tent to listen to your favorite genre of music...there's something for everyone. R&B Music Night is Friday at 2100L/1630Z. Country Music Night is Sunday at 1800L/1330Z. Salsa Night is Monday at 2030L/1600Z.

### COMBAT PUSH TIMES

Combat Push times are Monday, Wednesday and Friday in the Camp Cunningham Rec Tent from 0900L/0430Z to 1000L/0530Z. Services, Comm and PERSCO will be available to sign outprocessing checklists. Personnel

must complete your Post Deployment Health Questionnaire on-line and pick up your medical records at Flight Medicine/Public Health before coming to Combat

### ATTENTION ALL AIRMEN

The Bagram Airmen Committed to Excellence, or ACE, meet Wednesday at 1700L/1230Z at Camp Cunningham's Town Hall. The meetings provide Airmen an outlet to voice concerns. Contact Senior Airman Vanna Johnson at vanna.b.johnson@afghan.swa.army.mil or Airman 1st Class Rayyuri Powell at 431-4359 for more information.

### ATTENTION ALL JUNIOR NCOS

The Bagram AF Route 5/6 meets Thursdays at 1800L/1330Z at Camp Cunningham's Town Hall. The meetings are open to all staff sergeant selects, staff sergeants and tech sergeants. Contact Tech Sgt. Stephen DeWeese, 431-3212 or Tech Sgt. Charles Heywood, 431-2820 for more information.

### HOMETOWN NEWS

Airmen who are deploying or redeploying can "get the word out" about notable events related to their service via the Hometown News Program. The process is easy - individuals simply fill out, sign and return the Hometown News Release (available on the Bagram website, <http://www.bagram.afnews.af.mil>, under "Other Links") to Public Affairs (paper copy or scanned electronic copy)

and PA will take care of the rest by marketing these events to their local media. Some examples of events include: award of Afghanistan Campaign Medal, NATO Medal, arrival for deployment, completion of deployment, etc. For more information, contact public affairs at 455aewpa@swa.army.mil.

### BAGRAM AIRFIELD FLIGHTLINE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

The 455th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron reminds all service members that the Bagram Airfield flightline is a "controlled area" and all personnel require either specific inclusion on a certified entry authorization list (EAL), a restricted area badge issued by the 455 ESFS Pass & Registration section, or an authorized escort. Additionally, personnel driving vehicles onto the flight line must have both a restricted area badge and an authenticated AF Form 483 (Flightline Driving Competency Card) on their person to enter. For additional questions or concerns, please contact Air Force Security Forces operations at 481-6018.

**NEWS BRIEF SUBMISSIONS SHOULD BE SENT TO**  
**455aewpa@swa.army.mil WITH THE SUBJECT LINE "NEWS BRIEFS" AND INCLUDE POC INFORMATION.**



## Blowing hot air

**BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan** - Senior Airman Eric Jordan, 455th Expeditionary Maintenance Group Electrical & Environmental backshop, runs hot oxygen through the lines to purge all impurities ensuring pilots have 100 percent pure oxygen during missions in the A-10 aircraft. Airman Jordan is deployed from the 52nd Component Maintenance Squadron, Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany. (U.S. Air Force Photo by Master Sgt. Demetrius Lester)

## WORKSHOP from Page 2

than if they are from another province in Afghanistan,” said Captain Aftanas. “If they are from Afghanistan, they’ll receive a better percentage than if they are from another country. This is one way to ensure that it is not only Afghans helping Afghans, but neighbors are helping neighbors,” he said.

The third difference is all winning bid packages will now be made public. This policy is being incorporated for a couple of different reasons.

“We can sit down with a contractor now, review the contractor’s scores in our best value matrix, and show them why they did or did not get a bid,” said Captain Aftanas. “This will help the contractors become better at their jobs as well as be able to submit better packages in the future.”

When the engineers discussed this new aspect of the contracting process, many of the contractors smiled and nodded. Numerous contractors said that seeing the winning packages and knowing where they fell short would allow them to be more competitive in the future.

The last topic covered at the workshop was the institution of the Professional

Engineering and Science Association of Panjshir Province. The association is the brainchild of Jerry Maurseth, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers civilian assigned to Panjshir PRT.

“A professional association works together to determine agreed-upon standards and then publishes them to be used in the community,” said Mr. Maurseth. “By

helping the engineers of Panjshir Province create their own professional association, we’re hoping to enable them to not only share ideas between themselves, but to possibly provide their expert council and guidance to members of their local governments when necessary.”

“This way the engineering community will be able to create and institute some of their own construction upgrades and standards just like the ones introduced at today’s workshop,” said Mr. Maurseth. “There’s a great deal of opportunity ahead, and if we all work together we can ensure many great things can be accomplished – not only here in Panjshir, but throughout Afghanistan.”

“What we want the people here to remember is that we work for the government of Panjshir and we help support the governor’s plans for continued stability and development,” added Captain Aftanas. “By having these workshops and helping the local engineers create a professional association we are ensuring that everyone knows they can support the governor’s plans as well.”

“I used to work at another PRT here in Afghanistan and I could immediately see differences in how projects are chosen and supported by the government of Panjshir,” explained Captain McGinnis. “One of the reasons the project quality is so good here in Panjshir is the secure environment. Contractors and laborers are not afraid to work here like they are in other provinces,” he continued. “And they know that when they build a good quality project here it will last for a long time.”